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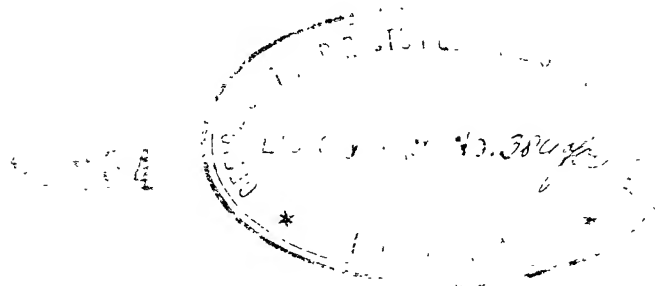
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## POTTERY AND GLASSWARE OF BENGAL.

BY

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# Pottery and Glassware of Bengal.

## 1.—POTTERY.

THE want of a pot was felt almost from the very beginning of things,—<sup>The first pot of the world.</sup> since there was a keeper and since there was anything to keep. The necessity for such a thing was felt even in the very nebulous stage of the world, when the gods and demons combined to churn the ocean for its wealth. That fierce churning yielded many precious things, among which was the nectar to make the gods immortal for all time. Something was now needed to hold the nectar. Viswakarmá, the celestial artificer, pondered and took out from each of the assembled gods a bit of the *Kalá* or spirit with which their bodies are made, and moulded it into a pot, perhaps the first of its kind in the world. From *Kalá* came the Sanskrit word *Kalasa* or water-pot.

But the manufacture of a single pot from a handful of spirit subscribed by the gods was by no means calculated to satisfy the needs of the world. The demand was universal, and what was required was a regular, organised caste with the exclusive privilege of making pots. Siva, ever thoughtful for the happiness of the world, at length removed this long-felt want. It so chanced that on the occasion of his marriage with Sati, the manifested Primordial Energy, no pot could be had for the requisite ceremonies. The moment was critical, and there could be no delay. So the bridegroom god took out a bead from his necklace, and out of it created a man and out of another he created a woman, and bade them forthwith to prepare a *Kumbha* or water-pot. This was the origin of our Kumbhakár or potter caste, abbreviated into Kumar in Bengal, and Kumhar in Upper India. The Kumars to this day are not wanting in gratitude to the creator of their progenitors. They call themselves Rudrapál, which was the name given to the first potter, consider themselves the protégé of Rudra or Siva, place his image on the middle of their wheel, leave it unturned for the whole of the first month of the Bengali year, and finally on the last day they worship the idol and throw it into the water. Nor are they unmindful of the originator of their craft, the god Viswakarmá, who made the first pot of the world to keep the nectar in. Him they worship on the day the sun enters the sign of Capricorn, his symbol being the implements of the craft, before which they present sweets, fruits and other delicacies. Rudrapál himself is also worshipped by the potters of Orissa. They place his image between those of Radhá and Krishna, and on the sixth day of the new moon in the month of November, fried paddy, plantains, cocoanuts and other offerings are presented to him. Various other accounts are given in the sacred books about the origin of the potter caste, but that related here is the one best calculated to raise this class of artisans in the estimation of the world.

At any rate, the manufacture of earthenware was practised in India from a time quite beyond the memory of man. The facility with which clay can be kneaded into dough, turned into any shape and hardened by baking, could never escape the notice of even the most unobserving of primitive men. Nor was the work of making pots beyond the intelligence of the rudest savage. But to do it with the aid of a horizontally revolving wheel was decidedly a great advance in the art. In a comparatively modern age the Greeks might

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claim for Corœbus of Athens, Hyberbius of Corinth, or Talamus, the nephew of Dædalos, the honour of inventing the potter's wheel, but nevertheless long before that period it went on revolving in the humble cottage of the Indian artisan, even at so remote a time when the nomadic Aryans tended their flocks, and sitting around their camp-fires drank the *soma* and sang the sacred hymns of the earliest Vedas. Nor was its use unknown among the other ancient nations of the East. "Then I went down to the potter's house and he wrought a work on the wheels," so sang Jeremiah, the Hebrew prophet.

Want of  
material.

But, though the manufacture of household earthenware was practised from the most remote antiquity, in Bengal at least the industry never attained to the position of a sumptuary art. The early Aryan hamlets that step by step descended down the sacred waters of the Ganges and clustered on the fertile plains of Bengal, found no hint or encouragement in the alluvial soil to develop the manufacture of ware like the hard porcelain of King-te-chin in China, or the translucent vases of Imali in Japan. Materials like the Kaolin of China or the Keramos-substance of Greece might lie further west, among the freebooting savages whom, in a later age, Cleveland won over by love, or in the then unexplored and inaccessible hills and jungles where the wild men struggled with the wild beasts for dominion over the land, but they hardly ever came within the reach of the ingenious Aryan hand.

Caste-rules in  
the way.

Caste-rules again have stood in the way of the development of Bengal pottery into an ornamental art. The abundance of the raw material and the ease with which it can be manipulated into vessels, have rendered earthenware of so little value, that even the poorest can afford to throw the old ones away from time to time and to replace them with new. Indeed, of so little value is the potter's stock-in-trade, that there is a proverb about him in Behar: *Nichint sute kumhra, matiya nale jay chor*—"The potter sleeps secure, for none will steal his clay." So earthenware has come to be looked upon as things peculiarly susceptible of defilement. All the cooking-pots in use must be thrown away on a death occurring in the house or of a near relative. The same rule is also observed on the occasion of an eclipse, be it of the sun or the moon. As plates or dishes for eating cooked food or cups for drinking water, they cannot be used more than once, and so they are seldom made or employed for such a purpose, except by the Muhammadans, who have no such prejudices. To lavish ornamentation on such temporary and insecure an article would be but waste of time and labour, and, indeed, with very few exceptions, no ornamentation whatever is attempted. Thus the art of pot-making in Bengal never got beyond the coarse redware of the ancient Egyptians, or at best the smooth blackware of the Etruscans.

Glazing not  
known.

As to glazing, it is all but unknown to the potters of Bengal. Even the use of oxide of copper, which gave the beautiful blue tints to the ancient Egyptian porcelain, exported to decorate the graves of Greece and the sepulchres of Etruria, or of common salt, which glazed the celebrated Bellarmine bottles of Holland, has never been attempted by the potters of Bengal. Glazing would perhaps be impracticable with the ordinary potter's clay found in the country, owing to its unrefractory character from the presence in it of a large proportion of oxide of iron and carbonate of lime, and more often for the admixture with it of large quantities of organic matter. Where good clay is likely to be found, no alchemist Bottcher has yet appeared to wring the secrets of nature, no Madame Darnot to make a discovery, and no Wedgwood by

untiring zeal and unabating patience to revolutionise the household industry of a country.

Almost the only pottery in Bengal, which can affect the least pretension to artistic merit, is that made in Sewan, in the District of Sâran. But even this is an inferior imitation of that made in Azamgarh, in the North-Western Provinces. Sir George Birdwood speaks of this pottery as "generally feeble and ricketty in form, and insipid and meretricious in decoration, defects to which its fine, black colour gives the greater prominence." The Sewan pottery has, however, some reputation outside the place of manufacture; but the demand for it is so small that it does not give employment to more than four families of potters. The ware is either white, red, or black, the last being the most admired. The vessels to be made black are baked within earthen jars to prevent their coming in contact with the flames. Sewan blackware resembles in some respects the Roman black pottery of later times, the colour of which was produced by confining the smoke in the furnace, and throwing it down upon the heated vessels. They are partially glazed with a mixture consisting of a kind of clay found in the district, Fuller's-earth and mango bark. The mixture is first dried in the sun, then powdered, and lastly dissolved in water before being applied. Black colour is produced in other places by burning a quantity of oil-cake in the kiln along with the earthenware. The Sewan red and blackwares are either left plain or have silvery floral or geometrical patterns. The decoration is produced by etching the patterns on the surface and rubbing into them an amalgam of mercury and tin. Powdered mica is also used to produce similar patterns. The articles usually made are surâhis or water-goblets, farsi or smoking bowls, chhilam or tobacco-pipes, and abkhorâ or drinking vessels. The art has also been adapted to meet the requirements of European customers, for whom flower-vases, plates, cups and saucers, milk jugs, butter-pots, spittoons and other articles are made. The patterns for the decoration of these are mostly copied from designs supplied by the European customers themselves. The shape of some of the flower vases of Sewan resemble those of Greece in style and form.

A black pottery without any kind of ornamentation is made at Khanja, a village in the District of Khulna. The articles made here justly deserve praise for their high polish and elegant shapes, fully illustrating the meaning of Sir George Birdwood's remarks that "nothing can be worse in taste, nor, in an æsthetic sense, more wasteful, than to hide a lovely form under an excess of foreign ornament." The articles usually made are betel-holders, oil-pots, smoking bowls, etc. The betel-holder of Khanja somewhat resembles in style the vase of Henry II ware.

Water-pots, betel-boxes, oil-pots, smoking bowls, ink-pots, incense-burners and other articles are made at Dinajpur with some degree of finish, so as to raise them to a certain extent to the position of ornamental art. The shapes are also good.

But the poverty of Bengal in the matter of art pottery is best illustrated by the contributions made to the different exhibitions held within the last few years. The late Mr. H. H. Locke, Principal of the School of Art, Calcutta, and himself an artist of considerable merit, in collecting articles for the Melbourne exhibition of 1880, considered the Sewan pottery as the only one in the Province worth sending to a foreign country. At the Calcutta Exhibition of Indian Art Manufactures, 1882, which specially concerned the Province, only 91 specimens were received to represent the industry in Bengal, Behar and Orissa. Of these 34 were from Sewan, 30 from Khanja, 12 from Gaya, 5 from Kantalia, in



the District of Murshidabad, 5 from Barisal, 2 from Kodalia, in the District of 24-Parganas, 2 from Manjha, in the District of Saran, and 1 from Balasore. Even many of these can only be classed as works of art more from compliment than from actual merit. In the Calcutta International Exhibition of 1883-84, the industry of the Province was represented by 2 goblets, 2 cups and 3 smoking-pipes from Tipperah, 55 specimens from Sewan, a tea-pot and a butter-pot from Sitamarhi, 10 pieces of earthenware from Murshidabad, one rupee worth of pots and plates from Chittagong,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  annas worth of smoking-pipes from Patna, 10 pieces from Muzaffarpur, and R2 worth of cups, dishes, and pots from Satkhira, in the District of Khulna. The collection sent to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of London, 1886, was equally poor, consisting of a few pieces from Sewan, Khanja, Dinajpur, Murshidabad, Patna and the 24-Parganas. In the Economic and Art Section of the Indian Museum, only eight places are represented, *viz.*, Sewan 88 specimens, Khanja 13, Birbhum 57, Dinajpur 5, Gaya 11, Tipperah 3, Chittagong 3, Hooghly 4, and Muzaffarpur 2.

Birbhum  
pottery.

The unglazed terracotta ware of Birbhum deserves mention. The articles mostly made are suráhis or water-goblets, drinking cups, spittoons, plates, smoking bowls, and lamps. The shapes are good, and a rude attempt is sometimes made towards ornamentation. This consists in tracing on the soft unbaked vessel floral and other patterns with a sharp tool and afterwards filling the narrow incisions with some white substance. Birbhum also makes a kind of blackware, but not so good as those of Sewan or Khanja. Some of the black flower vases of Birbhum resemble in shape to that of Tyg of Staffordshire ware.

Nawada  
pottery.

Fancy pottery is also made in Nawada, in the Gaya District, but the articles are of very poor quality.

Hooghly  
pottery.

The pottery of Hooghly deserves notice, as it presents the only examples of Bengal *faience* in the museum collection. The specimens consist of two flower tubs and two water-goblets. The body of the ware is the usual red clay, coated over with a semi-vitrified green glaze. This seems to be an attempt to introduce the manufacture of glazed pottery in the country, but the industry does not appear to have made much of an advance.

Raniganj  
pottery.

The manufacture of glazed ware according to modern methods has been successfully introduced into the country by Messrs. Burn & Co. in their pottery works at Raniganj. Besides bricks, tiles and drainage pipes, large quantities of terracotta ornamental ware are also turned out from these pottery works, but they can hardly be included in an account of indigenous Indian art.

Household  
pottery.

Ordinary household pottery is made almost in every large village and town in the country. As the potter-caste seldom takes to any other profession than making earthenware, the centres of industry may be best understood from the number of potters found in each division of the Province at the census of 1892 :—

Division.	Number of potters.	Number actually engaged in making earthenware.
Burdwan . . . . .	71,918	52,918
Presidency . . . . .	75,985	53,259
Rajshahi . . . . .	45,216	31,125
Dacca . . . . .	66,793	52,459
Chittagong . . . . .	21,171	25,006
Patna . . . . .	202,762	123,239
Bhagalpur . . . . .	94,245	46,869
Orissa . . . . .	44,594	37,946
Chutia Nagpur . . . . .	75,949	39,662

The following list, though not an exhaustive one, may be given here of the ordinary household articles as made by the potters of the country :—

*Water vessels.*

*Jálá*, a large vessel, used to keep water as well as to store grain ; brought to Calcutta from Saremga. Household  
utensils.

*Kalsi*, a smaller vessel, a number of which is kept almost in every house to cool water ; brought to Calcutta from Báliganj.

*Kunjá* or *Suráhi*, a porous water-goblet, used to cool water ; largely made at Konnagar, Magrá and Pandua, in the Hooghly District ; also in Monghyr.

*Gamlá*, a flat open-mouthed vessel, used to keep water, steep rice, and for other purposes ; made in most places. Mostly brought to Calcutta from Uttarpára in the Hooghly District.

*Cooking-pots.*

*Hánri*, a cooking-pot in which rice is boiled ; made in most places ; brought to Calcutta from Paintel, Chandernagore, Ghátál and Bágerhát.

*Tijel*, a smaller vessel in which pulses, vegetables and fish are cooked ; made in all places ; brought to Calcutta chiefly from the above localities.

*Málsá*, a thick open-mouthed round basin, kept among cooking utensils to keep water, etc. Hindus in mourning use this vessel for cooking food. Brought to Calcutta from Báliganj.

*Sará*, cover for cooking-pots ; brought to Calcutta from Baliganj.

*Kará*, or frying pan ; generally made of iron ; brought to Calcutta from Amtá, in the Hooghly District.

*Chátu*, a shallow pan, used to bake unleavened bread ; brought to Calcutta from Amtá, in the Hooghly District.

*Khuli*, a deep circular pan, used for making sweetmeats ; brought to Calcutta from Sayta.

*Eating and drinking vessels.*

*Thálá*, plate, seldom used by Hindus ; brought to Calcutta from Tára-keswar.

*Shának*, dish, used by Muhammadans for eating food ; brought to Calcutta from Amtá.

*Badná*, a water vessel with a spout, used by Muhammadans.

*Gelás*, a tumbler, corruption of "glass," used to provide water to guests in feasts ; thrown away after being once used ; made in Calcutta, also brought from Uttarpára, in the Hooghly District.

*Bati*, cup, seldom used by Hindus ; made in Calcutta.

*Khuri*, a small shallow cup, used to hold offerings for gods, and also in feasts for providing the guests with liquid food ; made in Calcutta, also brought from Uttarpára, in the Hooghly District.

*Articles used in worship.*

*Ghat*, a water vessel, used as a symbol for any god when no image is made ; brought to Calcutta from Chandernagore.

*Shánk*, an imitation of the conch-shell, used for blowing during worship ; brought to Calcutta from Jessore.

*Amriti*, a pot for keeping holy water.

*Dhunachi*, incense-burner ; brought to Calcutta from Amtá, in the Hooghly District.

*Idols* are also made by the potters, but this subject, together with that of clay modelling and manufacture of clay toys, should form a separate article by itself.

*Other household articles.*

*Kenre*, milk-pot ; brought to Calcutta from Tárakeswar.

*Bhánr*, oil-pot ; brought to Calcutta from Uttarpára, Tárakeswar, and other places.

*Pradip*, lamp, both red and black ; brought to Calcutta from Baidyabáti, in the Hooghly District, and Baj-baj, Badat-talá, and other places in the 24-Par-ganas District.

*Delko*, lamp-stand ; brought to Calcutta from Uttarpára.

*Hukká*, smoking bowl ; this is generally made of cocoanut shell, an imitation is also made in clay ; brought to Calcutta from Táki.

*Kalke* or *chilm*, smoking pipe, brought to Calcutta from Serampur, Bali, and other places in the Hooghly District.

*Chakmaki*, tobacco-holder ; brought to Calcutta from Uttarpára.

*Doyát*, ink bottle ; made in Calcutta.

*Morá*, stool ; made at Uttarpára.

*Tab*, flower tub ; made at Badat-talá.

Besides the above, various other articles are made by the potters, such as drums, flutes, drainage-pipes, rain-water pipes, rings for wells, railings, shells for fire-works, tiles, etc.

Behar earthen-  
ware.

The following list of earthenware taken from Mr. Grierson's "Behar Peasant Life" will not be uninteresting to students of Indian home affairs :—

*Abkhorá*, a drinking vessel.

*Adhkar*, a vessel used in distilling.

*Arhaiya*, a vessel to contain  $3\frac{1}{2}$  quarts.

*Athrá*, a pan for making dough.

*Athri*, a smaller vessel than the above ; used in Gya for holding water, washing clothes, and roasting poppy flower cakes.

*Badhná*, a water vessel with a spout.

*Bahná*, a large flat jar.

*Baruká*, a drinking vessel.

*Basni*, a vessel for holding or drawing water.

*Bhabhka*, a vessel used in distilling.

*Bhánr*, a vessel with a neck for milk and clarified butter.

*Bharuká*, a drinking vessel of South Tirhoot.

*Bhojahri*, an earthen dish used by Musalmans at marriages.

*Bhurká*, *Bhurki*, a drinking cup.

*Bithar*, a large dish.

*Charna*, a vessel for holding grain or for cooking.

*Chatti*, a cooking vessel of Patna and Gya.

*Chaumpi*, an earthen vessel to boil milk.

*Cherua*, a cooking dish or for holding grain.

*Chhanan*, a vessel with cloth at the top for straining toddy.

*Chhilám*, the smoking pipe.

*Chhonr*, a large earthen jar.

*Chhonri*, a vessel for keeping water or grain.

*Chikni-hánri*, a vessel for cooking vegetables, pulses, etc. After using it for several months it becomes polished and durable owing to the oil and butter cooked in it.

*Chirak*, *chirág*, a lamp-saucer.

*Chukka*, a drinking vessel.

*Chukkar*, a vessel with straight sides and a very short neck, used for drinking.

*Chukni*, a small earthen jar of Gaya.

*Chukri*, a drinking vessel.

*Daba*, a vessel used for drawing water, smaller than a *kalsi* ; in Tirhut it is used for boiling milk.

*Dabkan*, a saucer used in Gaya as a cover for other vessels.

*Dábri*, *Dibi*, a plate.

*Dahenri*, a vessel for holding tyre.

*Dawat*, an inkstand.

*Deg*, a cauldron.

*Dhakna*, a cover for other vessels.

*Dhimka*, a saucer used in Bhagalpur as a cover for other vessels.

*Dip*, a lamp-saucer.

*Diri*, ditto, smaller.

*Diuri*, ditto ditto.

*Diya*, a lamp-saucer.

*Diyari*, ditto, smaller.

*Gagri*, a vessel used for drawing water.

*Gamla*, a flower pot.

*Ghaila*, *Ghara*, a vessel for holding or drawing water.

*Ghariya*, a drinking vessel.

*Ghuchchi*, a little dish with a narrow neck.

*Ghurili*, a little vessel with a narrow neck.

*Hánri*, a vessel for cooking, or holding milk, tyre, etc.

*Hathauna*, a vessel for collecting date juice, larger than *Labni*, used when the juice flows freely.

*Jala*, a water jar.

*Jhabhi*, an earthen vessel into which cows are milked.

*Jhajjhar*, a craft for keeping water.

*Jhari*, a vessel with a long spout.

*Kalsa*, a water-pot, specially when ornamented with lime and colours at weddings.

*Kantiya*, a little vessel with a long neck ; cows are milked in it.

*Kapti*, a kind of cup.

*Karáhi*, an earthen pan in which clarified butter is cooked or milk boiled.

*Kárái*, a water vessel with a spout.

*Karna*, a vessel in which milk is boiled, also used for holding curds.

*Kastará*, a saucer for holding curds.

*Katti*, a round potsherd used by boys in playing.

*Karwa*, a water vessel with a spout.

*Khalchi*, a little platter.

*Khapra*, tiles.

*Khaprauri*, a pot for removing the afterbirths, etc., when a child is born.

*Khapri*, an earthen girdle for making bread or parching grain. When used for parching grain it is made by breaking off the top of a *Ghaila*, but that used as a girdle is especially made by the potter.

*Khawa*, an earthen cooking vessel.

*Khikhi*, a vessel for holding oil.

*Khor*, a long round earthen vessel used by saltpetre-makers for holding the mother liquor.

*Khum*, a large flat jar.

*Koha*, a small round wide-mouthed vessel for curd or for cooking. *Kohiya* is a smaller variety.

*Kunda*, a large flat jar.

*Kunra*, an earthen vessel in which sweetmeats or balls of rice mixed with sugar are given to daughters when going to their father-in-law's house.

*Kurhiya*, a small vessel for milk.

*Labna*, *Labni*, a water-pot in the shape of an ellipsoid, in which palm-juice is collected from the trees.

*Malwa*, a vessel for holding oil.

*Mangra*, the tiles along the edge of a roof.

*Mant*, a large flat jar.

*Martbán*, a vessel with a wide mouth, ornamented with lac.

*Matká*, a large vessel for holding water or grain.

*Maun*, a vessel for holding date juice.

*Meta*, *Meti*, *Metiya*, vessel for holding tyre.

*Mitiya*, a round vessel with a short neck for water.

*Nád*, a large basin or bowl, used as a feeding trough, and for other purposes.

*Nádiya*, a vessel for keeping tyre.

*Nadoi*, an earthen cooking vessel.

*Nariyá*, a kind of tile.

*Panchorá*, a vessel used in distilling.

*Parái*, a cover.

*Parchhá*, a large jar for water.

*Pariya*, a saucer used as a cover for other vessels.

*Patila*, a cooking vessel.

*Patuki*, a small round wide-mouthed vessel for keeping tyre or for cooking.

*Phuchchi*, a vessel for measuring milk.

*Phuri*, a saucer used by Muhammadans in feasts of the brotherhood.

*Pitaná*, a small pan.

*Piyálá*, a drinking cup.

*Ráis*, a little vessel with a narrow neck, used for holding milk and similar purposes.

*Ramchukká*, a drinking vessel.

*Ramkarwa*, ditto.

*Rekabi*, a saucer.

*Sanhak*, a broad plate dish used by Musalmans for eating boiled rice.

*Sanki*, a saucer used by Musalmans.

*Sarbi*, a cup for distributing pulse, etc., from the cooking-pot, used in marriages.

*Sepháli*, a flat earthen dish.

*Serhá*, a vessel for drinking spirits.

*Suráhi*, a water vessel, with a long narrow neck.

*Tabak*, a little platter.

*Tai*, a girdle for making bread; a kind of shallow pan, with an edge for lifting it up by.

*Tár*, *Tariyá*, an oil-pot.

*Tarkatti*, the vessel in which palm-juice is collected at the foot of the tree.

*Tastari*, a saucer used by Muhammadans.

*Taula*, a large dish for cooking.

*Tehra*, a pot for milk.

*Teláy*, a vessel for cooking oil or clarified butter.

*Telhánri*, a vessel for holding oil.

*Thal*, a platter.

*Thapri*, a vessel for measuring milk.

*Thiliyá*, a vessel used for drawing water.

*Tontiya*, a tile used as a water-spout at the eave of a house.

*Tuán*, a drinking vessel with a spout.

*Tuniyá*, a drinking vessel.

The potters of Bengal generally use two kinds of clay: the black earth or the sandy alluvial earth brought down as a silt by the rivers. The best pottery is said to be made in the Burdwan District on the banks of the river Bhagirathi, where the clay is specially suited for the manufacture of durable earthen vessels. In Dacca red laterite earth is imported from Bhowál for the manufacture of ordinary red vessels, the colour of the rim being deepened by coating it with a mixture of catechu and Fuller's-earth. In Eastern Bengal the earthenware made at Ráibázár in Dacca has a great reputation for its durability. In the cold weather, boats laden with cocoanuts come from Noakhali, Sandip and other places, returning with earthenware made at Ráibázár. Bijaypur in Tipperah is also famous for its pottery. The appliances used by the potter are extremely primitive. Beneath the same thatched roof are his kiln, storehouse, and dining and sleeping rooms. He prepares his clay at his door, which is simply done by mixing it with water and throwing away all objectionable articles found in it. Flat vessels that are not turned out of the wheel are fashioned by beating with a small wooden mallet, the clay being spread upon a vessel of the same kind to serve as a mould. The wheel is the Roman rota, a disk of clay weighted along the rim, revolving on a pivot made usually of tamarind wood. The neck and shoulders of all round vessels are fashioned on the wheel, the body being made by hand, often by women. The potters have very great reverence for their wheel. Whatever their occupation be, they consider it as the symbol of their caste. In Orissa, where some of the potters have turned agriculturists, they brand their cattle with a rude representation of the wheel. The whole caste in Orissa abstain from eating *sal* fish, and even worship it, because the rings on its scales resemble the wheel. The kiln is called *pan*, and is divided into two compartments, in which the vessels to be baked are carefully arranged, loose earth being heaped on the top, and the whole coated with a thick layer of clay. It is lighted generally

Mode of manufacture.

in the evening, the potter sitting whole night, feeding the fire by a little hole kept open on one side for the purpose. The fuel used are plantain leaves, grass, reeds and other light articles. A section of the potter caste, known as the Rajmahalia Kumars, thatch their drying houses with green grass, not tying it, but keeping it down by weights. In course of time when the grass dries, they use it as a fuel for the kiln. This section of the caste make cooking-pots for vegetables, milk-pans, and salvers, on which sweets and other delicacies are handed round at wedding feasts. They are prohibited to make idols or platters used at religious ceremonials. Although the potters do not turn their wheel for the whole of the first month of the Bengali year, they are permitted to dig and store clay. Some potters also consider it not unlawful to bake the pottery in that month.

#### Glazing.

As stated before, the potters of Bengal do not know how to glaze their ware or to fix the colours upon the vessels. At Monghyr, they sometimes put a coating of fine clay upon the vessels, but no attempt is made to fuse it to the point of vitrification. Fine black clay, mixed with river sand containing mica grains, is also similarly used. They also impart a whitish colour to some of their ware by washing it with a kind of porcelain clay before baking. In Burdwan, a clay called *Belutti* is used as a glaze without fusion.

#### Paintedware.

Some of the fancy pottery of Bengal is hand-painted with colours after they have been baked. The work is done by potters as well as by the women of the Patuás,—a half Hindu half Muhammadan caste,—whose business is to make toys and idols and to paint pictures. Red colour is produced from red lead, yellow from arsenic, green by mixing yellow arsenic and indigo, and black with lamp-black, charred rice or reeds. The colours before application are mixed with a mucilage obtained from the kernel of tamarind seeds or the gum adhering on the seeds of the *Bel* fruit (*Aegle Marmelos*). After being painted, the pots are varnished with the *Garjan* (*Dipterocarpus*) wood oil, or with the white of ducks' eggs. Images of deities made by the potters are further improved by powdered mica being sprinkled over them while the paint is still wet. The painting on earthen ware, as done in Bengal Proper, is, however, so roughly executed as scarcely to deserve to be called a work of art. The pots of Gaya are, however, painted with some artistic skill. The ground is generally red upon which yellow and green floral patterns are drawn interspersed with figures of birds and other animals. These pots are mostly used by tobacco sellers to decorate their shops, as well as to store materials with which the tobacco paste, called *Guráku*, is perfumed.

#### 2.—GLASSWARE.

#### Glassware.

Of glassware in Bengal there is very little to speak. Thin, flimsy bottles to keep perfumery, kerosine lamps, ink-bottles, and bangles are made in Calcutta, Patna and other places. The material used is old broken imported glass, which is melted down and blown into new shapes. Pure white glass is not made in Bengal, except at the factory of the Pioneer Glass Company of Titagarh, near Barrackpur, where medicinal bottles and other articles are manufactured with European appliances under European supervision. A green and opaque glass is made in Behar out of Son river sand mixed with carbonate of soda. This is used in the manufacture of glass bangles. At Bhagalpur, a coarse glass, for the manufacture of bangles and bracelets, is made of *Khari* or impure carbonate of soda. This is first melted, then thrown into cold water, powdered, again melted, formed into cakes and finally melted into rings. The

result is a black glass. Green glass is produced by adding peroxide of copper, prepared by putting salt and turmeric into a moistened copper plate. Blue glass is produced by adding an oxide of tin.

The only glassware in Bengal, which possesses some pretension to art, is Patna glass-ware that made in Patna. The articles made are suráhis or water-goblets, bottles, lotas, flower-vases, baskets, jugs, ábkhora or drinking vessels, cups, saucers, pots, etc. The material used is old broken glass. The articles are sometimes coloured yellow or blue, and adorned with golden patterns. Coloured glass is produced by the addition of indigo blue, sulphate of copper or other ingredients. The shapes of the Patna glassware are extremely elegant, but the industry is on the point of extinction for want of demand. Only two or three families are engaged in it, but they make no fancy glassware without order.







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Monograph on

pottery and glassware  
Bengal 1000

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